

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

INSTALLATION MASTER PLAN FOR FORT DETRICK, MARYLAND



Prepared by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with guidance provided in Army Regulation (AR) 200-2, *Environmental Effects of Army Actions*, dated March 29, 2002, implementing the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) (42 U.S. Code (USC) 4321-4347). The U.S. Army Garrison (USAG), Fort Detrick, Frederick, Maryland prepared this EA with assistance from BSA Environmental Services, Inc. and Analytical Services, Inc. This document has been printed on recycled paper.

This EA characterizes and analyzes the probable and possible environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action at Fort Detrick, Maryland. Any contemplated or likely action is considered a proposed activity, whether or not it materializes. This analysis considers impacts expected from current and proposed Installation activities, cumulative impacts that might occur after several years and impacts resulting from association with other activities in the area.

The Proposed Action and subject of this EA is to Implement the Land Use Plan for Fort Detrick, Maryland (Alternative I, the preferred alternative). The Proposed Action includes:

- Demolition of some existing buildings which are poorly situated, energy inefficient, and maintenance intensive. Because of distances among buildings, their operation results in wasted time when in-person coordination among offices and activities is required. These buildings were initially designed for an activity other than the one currently served or to house the activity temporarily. Some of these buildings were constructed during World War II (WWII) as temporary structures. The 23 buildings which will be demolished occupy approximately 152,000 gross square feet (gsf) of space;
- New construction of four better situated, energy efficient buildings to replace those demolished. The approximate size of the new buildings will be 169,000 gsf;
- Infrastructural improvements to Fort Detrick including reconfiguration of the Main Gate, Old Farm Gate, Opossumtown Gate, and internal roads. Additional parking lots and reconfiguration of some existing parking lots are included. These improvements to the gates and roadways will alleviate traffic congestion while providing improved security for the Installation workforce and residents of Fort Detrick;
- Designation of an approximately 200-acre area within Area A for a new BioMedical Research Park. Installation of roads and initial utilities to serve future tenants with biomedical research and development missions is included;
- Increased recreational opportunities for the workforce and residents of Fort Detrick;
- Enhancement of educational opportunities for children of Fort Detrick residents;
- Expansion of wetlands and increased forestation; and a
- Variety of security upgrades to protect both the workforce and residents of Fort Detrick.

During the preparation of this EA, one alternative to the Proposed Action was identified. This alternative is Do Not Implement the Land Use Plan for Fort Detrick, Maryland (Alternative II, No Action).

This EA characterizes the reasonably predictable environmental impacts that might result from implementation of the Proposed Action and the alternative.

Possible negligible to minor adverse impacts associated with construction include:

- potential minor impacts to soils;
- negligible impacts to water resources;
- minor impacts to wetlands;
- minor impacts to plants and animals;
- minor impacts to air quality;
- minor impacts to historical and cultural resources due to fugitive dust during construction;
- positive impacts to the local socioeconomic environment (the City of Frederick);
- minor impacts from noise;
- negligible impacts from odors;
- potential minor impacts to traffic off-post from construction vehicles;
- minor impacts to energy resources;
- negligible impacts to waste streams; and
- negligible impacts to human health and safety.

Possible negligible to minor adverse impacts, and positive impacts associated with operation include:

- minor adverse impacts (loss of agricultural land) and positive impacts (consolidation of similar activities on the Installation, gain of forested land, and increased wetlands) to land use;
- negligible impacts to soils;
- positive impacts to wetlands;
- positive impacts to plant and animal ecology (creation of high quality habitat);
- negligible impacts to air quality;
- positive impacts to historical and cultural resources (protective tree buffers, interpretive trails);
- positive impacts to the Fort Detrick socioeconomic environment (residents of Fort Detrick);
- positive impacts to housing on Fort Detrick;
- negligible impacts from noise;
- negligible impacts from odors;
- positive impacts to traffic from gate reconfigurations and roadway expansions;
- positive impacts to security;
- negligible impacts to energy resources;
- negligible impacts to waste streams;
- possible minor impacts to nearby residents from nuisance lighting (ball fields and running track); and
- negligible impacts to human health and safety.

All of the potential adverse impacts resulting from the implementation of the Proposed Action were deemed to be negligible to minor and mitigatable, provided that Best Management Practices (BMPs) are strictly adhered to during construction/demolition and operation of the proposed facilities.

The principal conclusions of this EA are: (1) implementing Alternative I (the preferred alternative) would result in no significant adverse environmental impacts, provided that BMPs to mitigate these potential environmental impacts are adhered to during construction/demolition and operation of the facilities; (2) implementing the Proposed Action will provide Fort Detrick

with much-needed infrastructural improvements which will increase efficiency and allow USAG and its tenants to achieve their respective mission requirements; (3) implementing the Land Use Plan for Fort Detrick (the Proposed Action) will increase recreational opportunities and security for the workforce and residents of Fort Detrick; (4) implementing Alternative I will expand and enhance the natural resources areas of the Installation; (5) implementing Alternative I is consistent with the land use planning objectives for Fort Detrick; (6) implementing Alternative II (No Action) would not provide Fort Detrick with much-needed infrastructural facilities and would hamper the ability of USAG and its tenants to meet their respective mission requirements; (7) implementing Alternative II (No Action) is not consistent with land use planning objectives for Fort Detrick; and (8) implementing the No Action alternative would eliminate the negligible to minor environmental impacts associated with the implementation of Alternative I, but would also eliminate the beneficial impacts of the Proposed Action.

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